

Governance of Silver Linings School

Version	Date	Updated by
1.0	04/01/24	Cate Tumman
1.1	13/01/25	Julia Whitesides

Governance, the Proprietor and the Challenge & Support Committee

This document sets out how governance for Silver Linings School is organised from 1st Jan 2024 onwards. These are the Terms of Reference. The children are the focus in all that we do and good governance will help us to do this to a higher standard.

Governance is through a proprietor-led model. This is backed up by a Challenge & Support Committee (C&SC). The Committee plays a significant role in the governance of the school.

This document outlines the model, and explains the purpose and detail of the C&SC, as well as the school's overall governance.

Appendices below detail the make-up of the C&SC, the agenda, the format for the Headteacher's Report and the overarching governance meetings schedule for Silver Linings School.

Purpose of the C&SC

The Purpose of C&SC is to support the Proprietor to

- Support the school in progressing forward towards a continued positive future
- Challenge and support the Headteacher in accounting for the school's performance
- Be guardians of the school's ethos and values
- Ensure a strong culture of safeguarding
- Make a positive contribution to the educational outcomes for our young people
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to the school leadership

The C&SC is a volunteer body which plays a key part in improving standards, ensuring accountability and delivering a child-centred approach to our school. A key role of the C&SC is to provide vital input to the school's leadership and management.

The C&SC ensures that the school Senior Leadership Team is embedding excellent standards for young people to allow them to achieve their goals in line with their own individual circumstance and ability, as well as ensuring that the team are challenging any barriers to young people's achievement.

The C&SC ensures that we are making decisions in the best interests of our learners and with sound long-term vision and planning.

Silver Linings School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils feel safe and fulfil their personal emotional and academic potential.

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The Committee has a sound understanding of our school ethos, including the therapeutic model, and challenges any practice that is contrary to this vision. It has input into policies and procedures within the school and joins discussions around future goals and development to improve outcomes for learners.

The C&SC is a source of support and appropriate challenge, and acts as a critical friend of the Headteacher, who is responsible for the day-to-day management, organisation and control of the school and who will with the Proprietor implement strategic aims, in part established by the Committee.

The Proprietor has the following strategic core responsibilities

- To have overall responsibility for governance of the school
- To chair and manage the C&SC
- To appoint the Headteacher
- To performance manage the Headteacher

The C&SC has the following core strategic functions

To support the proprietor with monitoring the school, and providing challenge for its development by helping to

- set the vision, values, aims and objectives for the school
- agree the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- oversee school development
- agree relevant policies and procedures
- engage with stakeholders
- contribute to school self-evaluation
- manage formal complaints/grievances in line with policy
- challenge the performance and progress of the school outcomes
- remain mindful of national expectations
- ensure value for money and appropriateness in terms of spending on the children

The purpose of the C&SC, along with the drive that the meetings schedule brings, and the rigour of the Headteacher/Proprietor relationship, propels the school into a virtuous circle of constant improvement. It does this as it fosters a constantly improving service that shares risk, evaluates thoroughly and reflects rigorously in a constantly ambitious way.

The C&SC

- Promote the school, its Vision, Mission and everything it stands for as expressed in documents, policies and the website
- Meet once a term with an agreed agenda, producing minutes and actions
- Challenge and support the school through the Proprietor and Headteacher

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- Take responsibility, with the Proprietor and Headteacher, for the school, its children, staff, stakeholders and sites including safeguarding and wellbeing
- Organise visits to the school in agreed ways e.g. Challenge Visits, interviews, events and similar
- Receive a Headteacher's report for each meeting in an agreed format and discuss that report in depth and rigorously
- Play an active and constructive role in the life of the school at events, meetings, and across communications such as email and with internal and external stakeholders
- Work at all times in alignment with the wider company

An agreed set of guidelines to operate as C&SC members

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand and agree with the purpose of the C&SC and the role of the Proprietor and Headteacher
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the C&SC or its delegated agents, and accept that we have no authority to act individually. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside full meetings
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the school and company
- We will actively challenge and support the Headteacher, through the Proprietor

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a member of the C&SC involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the C&SC, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including visits or working groups
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- We will use appropriate means to gather the voice of children and staff and carefully consider this to influence practice and strategic planning
- All visits to the school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the C&SC and agreed with the Proprietor and Headteacher
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training in a timely manner

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Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other members and colleagues
- We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- We will answer queries from other C&SC members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort, skills and good faith that have been committed by those involved
- We will seek to develop effective & appropriate working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, other relevant agencies and the community

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a C&SC meeting
- We will not reveal the details of any C&SC vote

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the C&SC's business, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise and commit to a termly declaration of any entertaining or gifts from or to stakeholders
- We will act in the best interests of the school and company as a whole and not as a representative of any group

Breaches of these agreed guidelines

If we believe these terms have been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Chair will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways in line with school policy and procedures.

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Appendix 1

Governance Meetings Schedule - Proprietor and C&SC

C&SC: 1 per term – i.e. 3 per year

Members attend, participate and present reports as relevant, e.g. the Headteacher, or anyone who has completed a Challenge Visit. (Reports to be circulated to all members of the C&SC five days prior to the meeting). These are then discussed and recorded in the minutes.

Challenge Visit

A member of the C&SC carries this out half-termly on an agreed topic – the agreed “Challenge” area - e.g. accompanying the Headteacher on a learning walk or scrutiny, or looking at an agreed area of development. They submit a 1-page report to the next full C&SC meeting, which is then discussed and recorded in the minutes. An overarching plan of meetings will be presented at the Autumn Meeting which has been decided by the Chair in discussion with the Head focusing on the areas for development in the school’s Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) or School Development Plan; these may change and develop as areas for development are highlighted by the C&SC throughout the year.

Monthly Monitoring

The Headteacher and Proprietor meet on a monthly basis with an agreed and minuted monitoring program. This links into both the Headteacher’s performance management, the school’s development plan, priorities expressed in the SEF and other aspects that arise. The planned topics for these meetings will be created in September, when the SEF is updated.

In addition, the Proprietor issues the Headteacher with monthly Quality Actions These are recorded and outcomes/actions are monitored via monthly meetings.

The Performance Management & Review of the Headteacher

This is a bi-annual system which is carried out by the Proprietor and is closely aligned to the monthly monitoring visits.

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Appendix 2

The Make-up and Members of the C&SC*

- Proprietor and Chair
- Headteacher
- Member of school staff – by election if necessary
- 2 parents – by election if necessary
- 2 community – by appointment
- Finance and Health & safety rep (invited as appropriate)
- Professional representative e.g. therapeutic.
- Admin - for minute taking

*this team will establish with time as the school community grows - initially will consist of Head teacher, proprietor & chair and Finance rep.

The C&SC will review its membership every year in the summer term meeting, for the following academic year.

It will also review its standing agenda and Terms of Reference (this document) at this time.

In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy will facilitate the meeting and stand in for the Chair.

Members will undertake an enhanced DBS check and complete training in safeguarding and related fields as appropriate.

Members may be asked to sit on panels to decide recruitment, performance management, complaints, exclusions or similar.

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Appendix 3

C&SC Agenda

- 1) Celebration item
- 2) Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising
- 3) Headteacher's Report
- 4) Challenge Visit Reports
- 5) Committee Members' points to raise
- 6) Development
- 7) Policies (where necessary)
- 8) Other items, news or updates
- 9) Calendar and diaries, including the next two Challenge Visits and the next two C&SC meetings

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